

REMARKS

Claims 1-15, 17, 25, 32-35 and 52-57 have been canceled. Claims 64-65 has been added. Thus, claims 16, 18-24, 26-31, 36-51 and 58-65 are currently pending.

Claims 16, 22-24, 26-28, 31, 36, 47-48, 51, 58 and 60-62 have been amended to replace the phrase "rental transaction details" with the phrase "rental record data." This change is not believed to narrow the scope of the claims and is made to better conform the claim language with the phrase "rental record" which is also used in the claims.

In claims 29-30 and 49-50, the phrases "rental information" and "rental vehicle information" have been replaced with the phrase "rental record data" so as to conform to the previously recited claim language. Again, this change is not believe to narrow the scope of the claims.

Claim 25 has been canceled and moved to new claim 65 and amended to depend from claim 26.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy of a telephonic interview held on August 24, 2004. During that interview, the claimed invention as well as the cited Rothert reference were discussed in detail. The remarks which follow reflect the substance of the discussion held with the Examiner.

Claims 16-26, 36-46 and 58-63 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rothert.

Claim 17 has been cancelled and added to claim 16. Applicants claim that rental record data (including driver identification linked vehicle identification) are transmitted to a selected rental vehicle. The Examiner cites to the data logger 20 in the system of Rothert and refers to a

communication operation described at col. 9, lines 49-52. The limitation of claim 16 clearly recites that the rental record data are transmitted TO the rental vehicle. The operations referred to by the Examiner with respect to the data logger 20, on the other hand, clearly refer to communications operations carried out in the opposite direction (i.e., FROM the vehicle). For example, at the cited location in Rothert (col. 9, lines 49-52) reference is made to a transmission including information identifying a particular vehicle. This description must be read in context with the rest of the Rothert specification. The “transmission” referenced in cited portion is a transmission made by the data logger 20 communication unit 23 FROM the vehicle to the central location at the time when the vehicle is returned to the rental lot. See, col. 9, lines 1-9. The Rothert communication disclosure fails to teach or suggest the claimed transmitting (TO) operation.

Applicants further claim in claim 16 the transmission of the rental record data (as stored) from the vehicle to an exit security point of a rental lot as the vehicle approaches the exit. The Examiner cites to transmitters 303 and 304 in the system of Rothert and refers to a communication operation described at col. 7, lines 37-41. The limitation of claim 16 clearly refers to a communication FROM the rental vehicle to the exit security point as the vehicle approaches the exit. The transmitter 303 and 304 operations noted by the Examiner, however, relate to signals transmitted TO the data logger 20 on the rental vehicle. More specifically, Applicants direct the Examiner’s attention to Rothert col. 8, lines 6-19 for a description of the exit procedures in Rothert. It will be noted from a review of these exit procedures that the data logger 20 does not operate in any mode to transmit stored information FROM the vehicle to an exit security point. Rather, just the opposite direction transmissions with respect to transmitters

303 and 304 are described in that these devices transmit information TO the vehicle as it approaches the exit in order to signal to the data logger 20 that the vehicle has been rented (col. 8, line 13). The Rothert communication disclosure fails to teach or suggest the claimed transmitting (FROM) operation.

Claim 16 further includes a limitation directed to printing of the rental agreement at the security exit point in response to the rental record data communicated from the vehicle to the exit security point as the vehicle approaches the exits. The Examiner cites to Rothert at col. 12, lines 29-42 as teaching this limitation. The cited portion of Rothert, however, discusses printing a credit card slip or receipt for the charges incurred in renting the vehicle. This slip/receipt is printed when the vehicle is returned to the rental lot. Claim 16, however, clearly recites that it is the rental agreement which is printed. This is well known to be a completely different document than the billing slip/receipt which evidences the charge for the rental. Additionally, claim 16 clearly recites that the agreement is printed at the exit security point. This is exactly the opposite location in the rental lot from where the charge slip/receipt is printed. Applicants' document is printed as the vehicle EXITS FROM the lot, while the slip/receipt in Rothert is printed when the vehicle RETURNS TO the lot.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 16 is neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of, the Rothert reference.

Claim 26 has been amended to include the limitations of amended claim 16. Applicants reassert the transmitted TO and transmitted FROM arguments recited above in favor of claim 16. Applicants further assert that no teaching exists for an operation to confirm, responsive to vehicle EXIT approach, that a rental record exists for the vehicle. The Examiner cites to Rothert

col. 7, lines 31-46 as teaching this limitation. The cited portions of Rothert, however, discuss data logger operation and receipt of transmitter 303/304 signals, for example on exit or return, that a particular action is to be taken (col. 7, lines 46-47). With specific reference to exit procedures, Rothert teaches at col. 8, lines 6-19 an operation wherein the transmitter 303/304 communicates with the data logger to signal that the vehicle has been rented (col. 8, line 13). There is no teaching or suggestion for performing any sort of confirmation operation, as claimed, when the vehicle approaches the lot exit to ensure that rental record for that vehicle exists. In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 26 is neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of, the Rothert reference.

Turning next to claim 36, Applicants claim that rental record data (such as driver identification linked to vehicle identification) are entered using an “in-vehicle user interface.” The Examiner’s analysis does not address how Rothert’s system meets this claim limitation. Applicants have reviewed the disclosure and fail to find any teaching or suggestion in Rothert for an operation where such rental record data is created using an in-vehicle user interface device as opposed to entered in conventional manner using a rental counter terminal or computer. The Rothert communication disclosure fails to teach or suggest the claimed entering operation.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 36 is neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of, the Rothert reference.

Turning now to claim 58, Applicants claim the transmission of rental record data (as stored comprising the driver identification linked with vehicle identification) from the vehicle to an exit security point of a rental lot as the vehicle approaches the exit. In connection with a similar limitation in claim 16, the Examiner cited to transmitters 303 and 304 in the system of

Rothert and referred to a communication operation described at col. 7, lines 37-41. The recited claim limitation clearly refers to a communication FROM the rental vehicle to the exit security point as the vehicle approaches the exit. The transmitter 303 and 304 operations noted by the Examiner, however, relate to signals transmitted TO the data logger 20 on the rental vehicle. More specifically, Applicants direct the Examiner's attention to Rothert col. 8, lines 6-19 for a description of the exit procedures in Rothert. It will be noted from a review of these exit procedures that the data logger 20 does not operate in any mode to transmit stored information FROM the vehicle to an exit security point. Rather, just the opposite direction transmissions with respect to transmitters 303 and 304 are described in that these devices transmit information TO the vehicle as it approaches the exit in order to signal to the data logger 20 that the vehicle has been rented (col. 8, line 13). The Rothert communication disclosure fails to teach or suggest the claimed transmitting (FROM) operation.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 36 is neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of, the Rothert reference.

Turning now to the dependent claims, Applicants claim in claims 37 and 59 the printing of a copy of the rental agreement for the vehicle at the exit security point. The Examiner cites to Rothert at col. 12, lines 29-42 as teaching this limitation. The cited portion of Rothert, however, discusses printing a credit card slip or receipt for the charges incurred in renting the vehicle. This slip/receipt is printed when the vehicle is returned to the rental lot. Dependent claims 37 and 59, however, clearly recite that it is the rental agreement which is printed. This is well known to be a completely different document than the billing slip/receipt which evidences the charge for the rental. Additionally, dependent claims 37 and 59 clearly recite that the agreement

is printed at the exit security point. This is exactly the opposite location in the rental lot from where the charge slip/receipt is printed. Applicants' document is printed as the vehicle EXITS FROM the lot, while the slip/receipt in Rothert is printed when the vehicle RETURNS TO the lot.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 37 and 59 are neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of, the Rothert reference.

Applicants further claim in dependent claim 22 transmitting the rental transaction details to the exit security point in a manner that does not pass through the rented vehicle. The Examiner cites to Rothert col. 2, lines 6-31 as teaching this limitation. The cited portions of Rothert, however, relate to vehicle return and thus are irrelevant to the claimed transmission made to the exit security point. In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 22 is neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of, the Rothert reference.

Applicants further claim in dependent claims 46 and 63 confirming, responsive to vehicle EXIT approach, that a rental record exists for the vehicle. The Examiner cites to Rothert col. 7, lines 31-46 as teaching this limitation. The cited portions of Rothert, however, discusses data logger operation and receipt of transmitter 303/304 signals, for example on exit or return, that a particular action is to be taken (col. 7, lines 46-47). With specific reference to exit procedures, Rothert teaches at col. 8, lines 6-19 an operation wherein the transmitter 303/304 communicates with the data logger to signal that the vehicle has been rented (col. 8, line 13). There is no teaching or suggestion for performing any sort of confirmation operation, as claimed, when the vehicle approaches the lot exit to ensure that rental record for that vehicle exists. In view of the

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foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 46 and 63 are neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of, the Rothert reference.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for favorable action and allowance.

Respectfully submitted,
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